

# God at work

## John 5 vs 1-29

John 5 sees the start of a new section in John's Gospel that runs through to chapter 10.

It begins and ends with two miracles. Jesus tells us that both are signs to teach us about God's work.

They show how Jesus miraculously breaks into creation to put it right. His work is all about God rescuing His people, giving them new life and bringing them into His new Creation.

As John writes at the end of his Gospel:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. - John 20 vs 30-31

## The Sabbath

Both miracles happen on 'the Sabbath'.

But what is the Sabbath?

The word 'Sabbath' simply means 'rest'! It comes from the book of Genesis at the start of the Bible. It speaks about a perfect relationship with God in His perfect universe. This is perfect rest.

Because we have rebelled against God we have never known a perfect relationship with Him, or the perfect universe that the original Sabbath in Genesis 2 was all about.

However, God did promise that one day He would rescue us and give us perfect rest. God gave His people laws about the Sabbath so that one day of the week they would both remember they were made for a perfect relationship with Him and look forward to the perfect universe He promised.

Sadly, the Jews of Jesus' day had missed the main point of the Sabbath - looking forward to His perfect rest - and were instead obsessed with the minute details of the laws.

## Start Here

### Chapter 5

- 1 Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals.
- 2 Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.
- 3 Here a great number of disabled people used to lie - the blind, the lame, the paralysed.\*
- 5 One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.
- 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, 'Do you want to get well?'
- 7 'Sir,' the invalid replied, 'I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.'
- 8 Then Jesus said to him, 'Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.'

- 9 At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,
- 10 and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, 'It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.'
- 11 But he replied, 'The man who made me well said to me, "Pick up your mat and walk."'
- 12 So they asked him, 'Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?'
- 13 The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.
- 14 Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, 'See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.'

\*Some early manuscripts omit v 4 as it might have been added by later copyists. Modern translations therefore do not include the verse.

## The paralysed man

<sup>8</sup> Then Jesus said to him, 'Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.'

<sup>9</sup> At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,

### John chapter 1 vs 1-4

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

How do these events pick up

on what we know of the Sabbath?

Jesus is working! He is doing the work that the Sabbath was all about.

What happens to the paralyzed man?

Jesus totally heals him. **v 8**

The man who couldn't move a muscle can now get up and walk. Remember he had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years! This is miraculous, and a picture of the perfect rest God promised. **v 9**

How did Jesus do this?

He simply speaks, and the man is instantly healed!

This was no magic trick – Jesus is the creator God! Let's read again Chapter 1 vs 1–4.

15 The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

16 So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him.

17 In his defence Jesus said to them, 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.'

18 For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

**How does Jesus defend working on the Sabbath?**

Jesus explains that He is doing His Father's work!

**What is the reaction of the Jews?**

The Jews reject God's work.

v 16 They persecute Jesus.

v 18 They totally refuse to recognize Jesus as God's Son and try even harder to kill Him.

## The job description...

In these next verses Jesus outlines His job description:

- What His work is
- Why He has come to do it
- When He will do it
- How He will do it

### What is His work?

To do the work of the Father!

- ▽ 19 He can do *nothing* by Himself.
- ▽ 19 He does *only* what He sees the Father doing.
- ▽ 19 *Whatever* the Father does He does.
- ▽ 20 The Father shows Him *all* that He is doing!
- ▽ 21 He *has come to give life* from the Father.
- ▽ 22 He has come to judge on the Father's behalf.
- ▽ 23 *Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father.*

<sup>19</sup> Jesus gave them this answer: 'Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.'

<sup>20</sup> For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed.

<sup>21</sup> For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.

<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,

<sup>23</sup> that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him.

So if we do not honour the Son

what are we saying to God?

<sup>24</sup> 'Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.

Verse 24 is a key verse - it summarises the whole section.

**Why has Jesus come?**

To bring eternal life, and save us from judgement.

**How does this happen?**

By hearing and believing in the words of Jesus.

**When does it happen?**

Now - as we cross over from death to life.

**Why does Jesus come and do this work?**

Jesus tells us that our natural condition without Him is dead and without hope.

If we don't believe Jesus we will still face His judgement. We remain dead, with no hope of life.

**So what's the big point from verses 23 and 24?**

If Jesus is God - as we have seen that He is - then not honouring Him is evidence of our refusal to honour God.

**So what is sin?**

First and foremost it is not about failing to be a decent person. No, it's all about failing to honour the Son - that is sin.

## Stop and think

### Are we guilty of sin?

Yes! All of us have failed to honour the Son  
That's why we stand condemned by God ↙  
That's why we are spiritually dead. ↙

Therefore without the work of God, through Jesus,  
we are condemned.

Being good enough is simply not good enough.

- Can a dead man help himself?
- Can a condemned man save himself?

No - we need help from outside of ourselves - Jesus.

This is one of the  
clearest and biggest  
lessons of John's  
Gospel - we have just  
discovered what 'sin'  
really is!

## When will Jesus do His work?

Now He is giving spiritual life to those who are spiritually dead.

Soon A day will come when He will raise all people – the living and the dead – to judgement. **vs 27, 29**

## Who will hear the voice of Jesus and what will be the result?

*Everyone!* That includes:

- relatives
- business colleagues
- people from every religion
- you and me
- the living and the dead!

And the result – will be judgement leading to either life or condemnation.

## How does Jesus do this work?

His word! **vs 25, 28**

Jesus does His work both now, as He gives us spiritual life with God, and at a fixed point in the future, when He will come to judge everyone.

He is sorting our eternal destiny! So it's vital we study **the Word!**

<sup>25</sup> Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live.

<sup>26</sup> For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.

<sup>27</sup> And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man.

<sup>28</sup> 'Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice

<sup>29</sup> and come out - those who have done what is good\* will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.

\*This is another way of saying: 'honouring the Son'.



## John 5 vs 1-29

<sup>1</sup> Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. <sup>3</sup> Here a great number of disabled people used to lie - the blind, the lame, the paralysed. <sup>4</sup> One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, 'Do you want to get well?' <sup>6</sup> 'Sir,' the invalid replied, 'I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.' <sup>7</sup> Then Jesus said to him, 'Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.' <sup>8</sup> At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, <sup>9</sup> and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, 'It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.' <sup>10</sup> But he replied, 'The man who made me well said to me, "Pick up your mat and walk."' <sup>11</sup> So they asked him, 'Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?' <sup>12</sup> The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there. <sup>13</sup> Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, 'See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.' <sup>14</sup> The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well. <sup>15</sup> So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. <sup>16</sup> In his defence Jesus said to them, 'My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.' <sup>17</sup> For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own

Father, making himself equal with God. <sup>18</sup> Jesus gave them this answer: 'Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. <sup>19</sup> For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed. <sup>20</sup> For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. <sup>21</sup> Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, <sup>22</sup> that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father, who sent him. <sup>23</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. <sup>24</sup> Very truly I tell you, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. <sup>25</sup> For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. <sup>26</sup> And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. <sup>27</sup> 'Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice <sup>28</sup> and come out - those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.

### Coming next...

...we will be in the 'courtroom'...  
looking at the evidence for these  
extraordinary claims by Jesus!

# Evidence that demands a verdict

John 5 vs 30-47

Chapters 5 to 10 are all about the work of God. Jesus does God's work! But these chapters also introduce us to people who reject Jesus.

In our first section, watch out for the sudden and dramatic shift in what Jesus says that appears half way through v 37!

<sup>30</sup> By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

<sup>31</sup> 'If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true.

<sup>32</sup> There is another who testifies in my favour, and I know that his testimony about me is true.

## The Defence: eyewitness evidence

What are the words that appear  
more than any others here?

- Testimony/testify.

*In this section, we are in the 'courtroom'... Jesus asks us to come to a verdict about Himself. Jesus walks us through the evidence so far.*

In Jewish law, if evidence was to be accepted it was necessary to have at least two male witnesses. Jesus explains that He does not simply speak on His own authority. **vs 31,32**

Jesus sets a higher standard than just 'human testimony'. **v 34**

What evidence does Jesus offer for  
who He is and what He is doing?

There are three major points of evidence to support His case – and they are all hugely impressive!

So what are they? →

<sup>33</sup> 'You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth.

<sup>34</sup> Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved.

<sup>35</sup> John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

<sup>36</sup> 'I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish - the very works that I am doing - testify that the Father has sent me.

<sup>37</sup> And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,

## The Evidence

- 1) The witness of John the Baptist  
John the Baptist was accepted as an established prophet sent by God. So John the Baptist's testimony is pretty impressive... **v 35**  
But Jesus says his testimony is even better than that! **v 36**
- 2) Not just Jesus' words - but his miraculous works too **v 36**
- 3) God's word in support of Jesus **v 37a**

The evidence for Jesus therefore, is like a three-legged stool...

We have:

- The Word of God (The Old Testament)
- The witness of John the Baptist
- The word and works of Jesus

### What does God say about Jesus?

God speaks, through his prophets, about the Messiah hundreds of times in the Old Testament. As we turn the pages of John's Gospel, we see how Jesus fulfils these promises, time and time again.

## From Defence to Prosecution

Did you spot the dramatic shift?

It's massive – Jesus is damning. He puts the Jews in the dock – because they don't know God!

Jesus now turns from *their* examination of Him to *His* examination of them!

This is serious! This 'courtroom' scene is taking place in the Temple, with the very people who are plotting to kill Him (remember v 18).

What is Jesus' evidence against *them*?

- 'Never heard his voice' **v 37b**
- 'Not seen his form' **v 37b**
- 'His word does not dwell in you' **v 38**
- 'You do not believe the one he sent'
- 'You study the Scriptures ... yet you refuse to come to me' **vs 39,40**

Even though they are in the Temple, they don't know God!

<sup>37</sup> And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form,

<sup>38</sup> nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent.

<sup>39</sup> You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me,

<sup>40</sup> yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

<sup>41</sup> 'I do not accept glory from human beings

<sup>42</sup> but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts.

<sup>43</sup> I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.

<sup>44</sup> How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

<sup>45</sup> 'But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set.'

<sup>46</sup> If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.

<sup>47</sup> But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?'

**In summary:**

They don't listen to God!

They don't believe God!

They don't love God!

They don't want God's praise!

**So what's the big problem?**

- They don't love God. **v 42**
- They love the glory that comes from each other, instead of looking for God's glory! **vs 43,44**

Forgetting God, they prefer their own importance.

Jesus concludes His 'courtroom' evidence with a sucker punch:

The Jews claim to be keeping the law for their hope of salvation. However, Moses, who gave them God's law and is their hero, is now the one who puts them in the 'dock'.

## Conclusion

Let's sum up the case as set by Jesus.

We have:

- a) vs 30-37a: The evidence for Jesus
- b) vs 37b-47: Jesus' case against the Jews

But the Jews are ignoring the evidence. Instead, they're more concerned about looking good in front of each other.

Jesus says that if we reject Him, the evidence convicts us:

- We don't love God
- Rather, we love the praise of people

This is sobering.  
But what do you make  
of the evidence?  
And what does this  
evidence say about our  
relationship with God?

## John 5 vs 30-47

<sup>30</sup> By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me. <sup>31</sup> 'If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. <sup>32</sup> There is another who testifies in my favour, and I know that his testimony about me is true. <sup>33</sup> 'You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. <sup>34</sup> Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. <sup>35</sup> John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light. <sup>36</sup> 'I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish - the very works that I am doing - testify that the Father has sent me. <sup>37</sup> And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, <sup>38</sup> nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. <sup>39</sup> You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, <sup>40</sup> yet you refuse to come to me to have life. <sup>41</sup> 'I do not accept glory from human beings, <sup>42</sup> but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. <sup>43</sup> I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. <sup>44</sup> How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? <sup>45</sup> 'But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser

is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. <sup>46</sup> If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. <sup>47</sup> But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?'

### What comes next?

Only Jesus can bring true satisfaction...



# Satisfaction

## John 6 vs 1-40

After a quick look back at the Old Testament we are going to hear how Jesus provides the food we really need.

### Setting the scene...

Moses is with the people of Israel out in the wilderness, having been able to escape slavery in the land of Egypt. God had rescued them!

### Exodus chapter 16 vs 4-8

Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.' So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?' Moses also said, 'You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD.'

Let's look at the parallels between Exodus 16 and what we are about to see in John 6:

1. They are both at Passover time and in the desert.
2. In both, God miraculously feeds His people. In the desert, God fed His people - so that they could make it to the Promised Land. In John, Jesus gives them bread that lasts for eternity!
3. They both are set up as a 'test'. In the desert - God 'tested' His people to see if they would depend on God to bring them to the Promised Land. In John, Jesus tells Philip that this is a 'test'.
4. They both involve God's people grumbling - lots!

## Chapter 6

- 1 Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias),
- 2 and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing those who were ill.
- 3 Then Jesus went up on a mountainside

and sat down with his disciples.

- 4 The Jewish Passover Festival was near.
- 5 When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming towards him, he said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?'
- 6 He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.
- 7 Philip answered him, 'It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!'
- 8 Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up,
- 9 'Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?'

## Thousands of hungry people fed

<sup>10</sup> Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there).

<sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish.

<sup>12</sup> When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, 'Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.'

<sup>13</sup> So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

**What is Jesus doing here?**

He miraculously feeds the people.

**Why is this important?**

It shows Jesus as God's rescuer. God's people were waiting for a 'Prophet like Moses' promised in the Old Testament.

**When is this taking place?**

At Passover time. **v 4**

Passover time is when the Jews are totally focused on:

- a) Being rescued
- b) Being right with God
- c) God feeding them

Would the disciples trust Jesus to feed them with the food they really needed? Or would they grumble and walk away because He didn't give them what they wanted?

14 After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.'

15 Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself.

What did the people say after seeing the miracle?

They think He must be the prophet (like Moses) whom God promised.

But what does Jesus do?

Jesus withdraws.

Why?

Because the people were planning a revolution. They wanted a political leader who would sort out their immediate needs.

But what would this achieve?

Jesus hadn't come to oust the Romans... He had come for something much bigger...

## Jesus proves Himself to the disciples!

<sup>16</sup> When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake,

<sup>17</sup> where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them.

<sup>18</sup> A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough.

<sup>19</sup> When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened.

<sup>20</sup> But he said to them, 'It is I; don't be afraid.'

<sup>21</sup> Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

What things are surprising in this story?

'Don't be afraid!' – What a statement from a man walking on water!

They arrive on the other side 'immediately' – in spite of the wind and the waves.

What does Jesus say to them?

'It is I...' This is the name God uses for Himself in the Old Testament.

v 20

Why does this all happen?

This miracle is for the disciples' benefit. Jesus is Lord over all His creation. Only He walks on water! Only He can rescue.

## Jesus is the bread of life

Jesus spells out what He has and has not come to do!

### What were the people looking for?

Food! **vs 26,27**

But Jesus hadn't come to fill their stomachs, just as He hadn't come to solve political problems. **v 15**

### What was Jesus concerned about?

Eternity.

Their bread will go mouldy – His bread lasts to 'eternal life'.

*Remember, back then people were employed by the day, and bought food with that day's wages. They haven't eaten since Jesus fed them the day before – so now they are back for more.*

<sup>22</sup> The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realised that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone.

<sup>23</sup> Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks.

<sup>24</sup> Once the crowd realised that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

<sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, 'Rabbi, when did you get here?'

<sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, 'Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.'

<sup>27</sup> Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.'

<sup>28</sup> Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?'

<sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.'

What question do the people ask?

They want to know what they must do.

But how does Jesus reply?

Believe in the one God has sent. Jesus has not come to make people religious by doing things. Instead He tells us to believe.

What do the crowd want?

They want to work their way to God.

v 28

We see this in all other religions.

But Jesus is *not* interested in our religious works for Him.

What does it mean to do the work of God?

There is only one answer - believe in Jesus. v 29

<sup>30</sup> So they asked him, 'What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?'

<sup>31</sup> Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat."

<sup>32</sup> Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.'

<sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.'

<sup>34</sup> 'Sir,' they said, 'always give us this bread.'

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

### What do the crowd want to see?

They want to see Him perform signs. Having just seen Him feed 5,000 men they aren't satisfied. They want more.

### But how does Jesus respond?

He hasn't come to be a 'circus pony'

So we've seen that Jesus hasn't come...

- As a political leader to sort out our political problems
- Or a material provider to meet the needs people feel they have
- Or with a religious programme to make us 'religious'
- Or as a 'party trick' magician from God

### So why has Jesus come?

Jesus deals with something much bigger than the here and now – He's concerned about eternity.

Jesus has come to give us an *absolutely* satisfying, and *eternally* rewarding relationship with God that lasts forever!



36 But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.

37 All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

38 For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

39 And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.

40 For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.'

How does Jesus provide this relationship?

v 32 The Jews honoured Moses because they thought Moses was the one who had provided bread for them in the desert. Jesus corrects them: God was always the provider.

v 33 Jesus has come down from heaven as 'bread' from God to give us 'life'.

So what is the will of God?

It's to give eternal life to everyone who believes in Jesus!

How can we sum up what we've just read?

- Jesus is on earth to do God's will
- God is calling everyone to believe in Him
- Jesus is not here just to give a quick meal
- Jesus has come to give something that lasts forever.

Conclusion

Jesus' work is not to...

- Give us all the material things we demand
- Give us religious duties that earn His favour
- Sort out our political problems
- Perform signs and miracles on demand

God's will is that we believe in Jesus and be satisfied in and with Him forever!

## John 6 vs 1-40

<sup>1</sup> Some time after this, Jesus crossed to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is, the Sea of Tiberias), <sup>2</sup> and a great crowd of people followed him because they saw the signs he had performed by healing those who were ill. <sup>3</sup> Then Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down with his disciples. <sup>4</sup> The Jewish Passover Festival was near. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus looked up and saw a great crowd coming towards him, he said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?' <sup>6</sup> He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do. <sup>7</sup> Philip answered him, 'It would take more than half a year's wages to buy enough bread for each one to have a bite!' <sup>8</sup> Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up, <sup>9</sup> 'Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?' <sup>10</sup> Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' There was plenty of grass in that place, and they sat down (about five thousand men were there). <sup>11</sup> Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. <sup>12</sup> When they had all had enough to eat, he said to his disciples, 'Gather the pieces that are left over. Let nothing be wasted.' <sup>13</sup> So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten. <sup>14</sup> After the people saw the sign Jesus performed, they began to say, 'Surely this is the Prophet who is to come into the world.' <sup>15</sup> Jesus, knowing that they intended to come and make him king by force, withdrew again to a mountain by himself. <sup>16</sup> When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, <sup>17</sup> where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. <sup>18</sup> A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. <sup>19</sup> When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were frightened. <sup>20</sup> But he said to them, 'It is I; don't be afraid.' <sup>21</sup> Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading. <sup>22</sup> The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realised that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his

disciples, but that they had gone away alone. <sup>23</sup> Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>24</sup> Once the crowd realised that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus. <sup>25</sup> When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, 'Rabbi, when did you get here?' <sup>26</sup> Jesus answered, 'Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. <sup>27</sup> Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.' <sup>28</sup> Then they asked him, 'What must we do to do the works God requires?' <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered, 'The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.' <sup>30</sup> So they asked him, 'What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?' <sup>31</sup> Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: "He gave them bread from heaven to eat." <sup>32</sup> Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup> For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' <sup>34</sup> 'Sir,' they said, 'always give us this bread.' <sup>35</sup> Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup> But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. <sup>37</sup> All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. <sup>38</sup> For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. <sup>39</sup> And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. <sup>40</sup> For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.'

### Coming next...

what Jesus says in the next study is so offensive that thousands turn away from him...

# Life!

John 6 vs 41-71

## Recap...

As we learnt at the start of chapter 6, these events are happening at Passover...

- The time when a perfect lamb was sacrificed and shared
- When God's people remembered that they had been rescued by God from their enemies and His judgement

Jesus has just fed 5,000 men (and their families). He was showing that He is the one who brings eternal life, satisfying our needs forever, not just for one meal.

Jesus was the one they were waiting for!

Jesus has moved from the large crowd to the synagogue - with the Jewish leaders, in Capernaum.

▼ 59 He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

We are going to look at two big questions:

## Q1: His identity

41 At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.'

42 They said, 'Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I came down from heaven"?'

43 'Stop grumbling among yourselves,' Jesus answered.

44 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.'

45 It is written in the Prophets: "They will all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me.

46 No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father.

What were the religiously educated

Jews unhappy about?

They were grumbling about who Jesus said He was.

How does Jesus respond?

Stop grumbling!

Who does Jesus say He is?

He has come from heaven. **v 41**

The Father has sent Him (and Jesus will raise them up at the last day). **v 44**

He is the Teacher sent by God.

**vs 45,46**

Jesus is claiming to have come from God – as God – to teach His people about God!

This is just as promised in Isaiah chapter 54 v 13, 700 years before: 'All your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be their peace.'

As He's done before, how does Jesus

question *their* relationship with God?

As you can't recognize me you can't be close to God. **v 44**

Eternal life from God comes through believing in Him.

### Belief in what?

Jesus – the bread of life. **v 48**

<sup>47</sup> Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life.

<sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life.

<sup>49</sup> Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died.

<sup>50</sup> But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die.

<sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live for ever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.'

### So what was Jesus' claim?

- **vs 42-46**  
'I am God! If you can't see I'm God, the problem is with you. You are not one of God's people, or else you'd recognize you're being taught by God!'
- **vs 47-51**  
'I am God! I bring eternal life... and the cost is my life. This is my mission.'

Jesus is very clear. He has come to bring life. The Israelites relied on God to provide manna in the desert, but it was temporary. In contrast, Jesus is the 'bread of life' – a life of eternity, right with God.

## Q2: His mission

What are Jews are unhappy about?

They are taking Jesus' words literally and seem to think He wants them to eat Him!

What does Jesus *actually* mean?

Remember John 6v35:

- Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life.
- Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and
- whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.'

In this verse when Jesus speaks of Himself as the bread of life, He is using picture language and does not expect us to eat Him literally!

In fact 'eats my flesh' **vs 54-56**  
...is 'comes to me' **v 35**.

And 'drinks my blood' **vs 54-56**  
...is 'believes in me' **v 35**.

- So then when Jesus speaks of 'eating' and 'drinking'
- He is using picture language to speak about His
- death on the cross. He wants us to: believe in Him
- v 35 ...come to Him v 35 ...and look to Him v 40

52 Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?'

53 Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.'

54 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink.

56 Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.

<sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me.

<sup>58</sup> This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live for ever.'

<sup>59</sup> He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

### What is He claiming?

Jesus is explaining to the religious Jews in the synagogue that:

- Through His death He is the eternal Passover Lamb
- His death will make full and final payment for our sin
- He will carry all God's judgement and righteous anger at sin
- This is the key to eternal life **v 54**
- Those who believe, He will take up to heaven **v 54**

### What does He offer?

Real fulfilment – true life, with God, that lasts forever! **vs 55,57,58**

### How can we have this?

Remember **v 56** – Jesus is talking in picture language about His death to come. It's all through His death on the cross.

Through the cross, we are eternally secure in Jesus, as we live in Jesus and He in us.

### Where has this been hinted at before?

- John the Baptist said in chapter 1v29: 'Look, the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!' We'll see this spelt out even more in chapter 19.

Before we move to vs 60-71 we need to deal with a knotty issue!

### **Do I choose God or does God choose me?**

There is no doubt from what Jesus says that we have to 'believe', 'feed', 'come' and 'drink'...

But, there is also no doubt that we cannot 'believe', or 'come' unless the He first enables us to do so!

In other words - 'God has prepared me by all the events leading up to the time when I have put my trust in Jesus.'

Perhaps it is worth asking - what would it be like if all this really did depend on us?

We would be:

- Full of pride - we could boast at how clever we've been!
- Full of insecurity as we waver - some days we will follow... some days we won't...



However uncomfortable we might find it... becoming a child in God's family is down to God - and His promise:

John 6v44: 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day.'

John 5v24: 'Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.'

- Dead people cannot raise themselves...
- Condemned people cannot free themselves...

Even so, He still commands us to 'come... look... and believe.'

John 6v47: 'Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life.'



60 On hearing it, many of his disciples said, 'This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?'

61 Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, 'Does this offend you?'

62 Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before!

63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you - they are full of the Spirit and life.

64 Yet there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him.

65 He went on to say, 'This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them.'

Look who's grumbling now!

His own followers. **vs 60-61**

How does Jesus respond?

You ain't seen nothing yet! **v 62**

v63 is key

What does the Spirit give?

Life! We have no life from God within us - we have already seen that we are spiritually dead.

How does the Spirit bring life?

The words of Jesus. **v 63**

The unbelief of some (including Judas) is no surprise to Jesus.

In v65 Jesus re-emphasises the point that we can only have life if God the Father gives it to us.

This chapter was 'set up' as 'a test' **v6**

How do some of Jesus' followers react to this teaching?

The Jews grumbled to Moses...

The followers have grumbled to Jesus...

and now some turn away.

Jesus is refusing to be the kind of Saviour they wanted Him to be.

How do the twelve respond to Jesus' question?

Now Peter has tasted the 'living bread', he'll never be satisfied with anything else!

Peter answers for the group: You are the life-giver!

Have you spotted the fact that all along there is a plan?

Of course Jesus knew all along that Judas would betray Him – Jesus is the Son of God.

<sup>66</sup> From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

<sup>67</sup> 'You do not want to leave too, do you?' Jesus asked the Twelve.

<sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

<sup>69</sup> We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.'

<sup>70</sup> Then Jesus replied, 'Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!'

<sup>71</sup> (He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

## John 6 vs 41-71

<sup>41</sup> At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, 'I am the bread that came down from heaven.' <sup>42</sup> They said, 'Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, "I came down from heaven"?' <sup>43</sup> 'Stop grumbling among yourselves,' Jesus answered. <sup>44</sup> 'No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. <sup>45</sup> It is written in the Prophets: "They will all be taught by God." Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. <sup>46</sup> No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. <sup>47</sup> Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. <sup>48</sup> I am the bread of life. <sup>49</sup> Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. <sup>50</sup> But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. <sup>51</sup> I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live for ever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' <sup>52</sup> Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' <sup>53</sup> Jesus said to them, 'Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. <sup>55</sup> For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. <sup>56</sup> Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father,

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Coming next...

Confusion matched with clarity!

# the Word

one to one

The Word One to One

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